

Co-opting Freire

A Critical Analysis of Pseudo-Freirean Adult Education

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In this paper, we have made an attempt to examine the Application of Freirean pedagogy in some recent adult education work. In the first part of the paper, we will present a theoretical model which explains some of the prominent socio-political and economic aspects of this work.

In the second part, we will make a case study of an international programme in non-formal adult education operated by a major non-government agency.

Prior to these two sections, we will provide a brief overview of the historical circumstances in which Freire's work and concepts came to international attention.

PAULO Freire's writings are now known around the world, and within the last decade several agencies of adult education have tried to reflect his influence in their policies and work. The terminology associated with his writings has found a place in reports and declarations coming from a wide range of national and international organisations. In fact, one can say that terms such as 'conscientisation,' 'dialogue', 'banking', and 'culture of silence' have become household expressions in adult education.

Until the sixties, non-formal education¹ operated on the margins of developmental activity, with little financial support and having weak links with economic projects. It usually catered to a small section of Third World societies, such as the relatively well-off farmers who attended agricultural extension programmes. As Mbilinyi [1977] has shown, there was no material basis for extending education to the majority of citizens :

There was no basic economic or political need for expansion of the primary education base, since 'super-exploitation' was possible without investment in our fundamental attention to either raising the level of productive forces within agricultural production or to fitting ideologically the peasants and workers to their place in production (p 498).

In the late sixties, the demand for increasing food production in the Third World was heavily emphasised by international development agencies and the rich, industrialised countries. During this period, a concomitant demand was made on non-formal education to provide the training required for the new technology of food production which was publicised under the Green Revolution. In 1963, UNESCO and UNDP launched the

Experimental World Literacy Programme, with the aim of increasing rural productivity by combining literacy instruction with vocational training in technology-dependent agricultural practices [UNESCO, 1976]. This programme was essentially aimed at creating a qualified work force, and for this aim, areas of potential economic growth and the people who would have the resources for increasing production were chosen [Berggren, 1975]. The UNESCO programme coincided with, and in many cases provided an educational support, for the Green Revolution.

By the end of the sixties, the traditional structures of rural society in the Third World countries and the impact of the Green Revolution³ had combined to create an explosive situation. In order to safeguard the interests of multinational corporations and the Third World elites, it was necessary to contain social discontent. The strategy designed by the World Bank, USAID, and other agencies was a modified Green Revolution — an attempt to extend the same technology, in a modified form, to the small-scale peasant, along with credit and other government services [Feder, 1976]. Land reforms and other structural changes were, once again, absent from the planners' considerations. The basic aim was to incorporate the peasant into the new production system. Under the banner of 'participation' in development, he was to be drawn away from any form of political participation which could ultimately prove harmful for the *status quo*.

The small scale peasant, who had so far been excluded from most non-formal educational provision and agricultural development programmes,³

now became the target of developmental planning under the Integrated Development Strategy. Non-formal education was to play an important role in this strategy as the training and socialising mechanism to create the new 'peasant capitalist' [see the report to World Bank by Coombs and Ahmed, 1974]. This was no narrow economic programme, like the earlier work-oriented literacy programme launched by the UNESCO. The purpose of the new programme was to cover all those aspects of a peasant's life that could facilitate his initiation into a consumer economy; aspects such as agriculture, health, sanitation, nutrition, fertility, and small-scale entrepreneurship. Massive amounts of money were spent by agencies like the World Bank and USAID to investigate the potential of non-formal education,

During the period, when the new aims of non-formal education were being formulated, the educational philosophy and practice of Paulo Freire became widely known through the English translations of his writings. Freire had developed and tested his ideas in Brazil and Chile within the context of peasants' and workers' struggles for land ownership, better working and living conditions and political rights. In his writings, he presented mass-illiteracy as a structural problem caused by oppression of the masses by the powerful classes in society. According to him, the problem could be solved only by breaking the oppressive structure. His work inspired many progressive groups throughout the world to use educational communication as a tool in struggles against oppression. He also attracted the attention of those

agencies that were developing an educational methodology for the incorporation of the small peasant into the consumer economy under the auspices of the Integrated Rural Development Strategy. These agencies found in Freire's terminology a progressive gloss which could make their approach marketable in the Third World. By co-opting Freire's terminology and concepts, they could hope to influence the direction of political change in the Third World.

The educational theory which grew out of the co-optation and distortion of Freire is referred in this paper as the 'pseudo-Freirean perspective'. Having shown its historical roots, we would now examine the theory in detail — what it is and how it represents a dilution of Freire. Of course, there is no formalised school that operates under this label, but there is a refinable group of institutions and individuals who seem to have distorted Freire in a common way. We will try to provide a synthesis of their ideas. This, of course, is our reconstruction of their ideas and methods. The reconstruction is based on our analysis of a number of documents put out by the ministries of education in several countries including India, Thailand, and Turkey; institutions such as Literacy House, Lucknow World Education, New York; and the University of Massachusetts Centre for International Education; and the writings of a number of individuals involved in non-formal adult education, e.g., Clark [1979], Harman [1973], Keehn [1972], Mehta [1978], Mezirow [1972], Oxenham [1972], Smith [1979], Srinivasan [1977], Tripathi and Prakash [1978], Sunanchai [1975], Bennett and Vorapipatana [1975].

Our concern here is not with the lack of orthodoxy in breaking front Freire's ideas. Our concern is with the development and promotion of a theory that operates under the cover of Freirean terminology, and serves material interests which are directly antithetical to Freire's aim of transforming the structures of oppression in the world. What we are attacking is: first, the watering down of an important idea which has served the interests of the oppressed in their struggles for liberation, and, secondly, the use of Freirean terminology and method without its substance as a smokescreen for the continued domestication of Third World peasants and workers in the interests of foreign capital.

The Pseudo-Freirean Perspective

The pseudo-Freirean perspective operates in adult education through the following steps:

naming the central problem as 'poverty' rather than as 'oppression';

identifying the cause of poverty as the self-inflicted deficiency of the poor, rather than oppression;

proposing, as treatment, to change the behaviour of the poor through transmission of information and skills;

converting Freire's method into a 'neutral' classroom technique without 'politics'; and

defining 'action' as coping activity.

The pseudo-Freirean perspective systematically avoids the use of the term 'oppression'. Terms like 'poverty', 'disadvantage', and 'deprivation' are used in the place of oppression. There is a "myth-making effort to identify as diabolical all thought-language which uses such words as 'alienation, domination, oppression' " [Freire, 1970, a]. The shift in terminology is significant, since 'oppression' leaves no doubt about the cause of nature of the problem whereas 'poverty' is ambiguous and suggests many possibilities. Oppression is an aspect of exploitation in an economic and social relationship. This connotation is not necessarily there when we talk about poverty.

This shift in terminology can be attributed to a theoretical basis. The pseudo-Freirean theory seems to be based on the concept of a 'culture of poverty' — the view that the poor have a distinctive set of self-inflicted habits and characteristics which explain their poverty and prevent them from improving their situation. For example, in stating the aim of a literacy project as "helping the learner to become critically aware of the reasons for his poverty and his backwardness", Mehta [1978] juxtaposes 'poverty' and 'backwardness', suggesting that it is the same learner who is poor as well as backward. Another example can be drawn from this statement regarding poverty and underdevelopment:

... peasant cultures are commonly characterised as lacking innovativeness, being fatalistic, seldom deferring present gratification for future advantages, and holding a limited view of the world. People in such cultures tend to believe that all the desirable things in life are in fixed supply, so that if someone accumulates an abnormally large share of good things it is at someone else's

expense. This philosophy helps explain the mutual distrust in interpersonal relations, the low degree of empathy, and the limited aspirations one often encounters in traditional societies.

(Mezirow, 1972, p 1-2)⁴

This itemization of putative defects and negative characteristics of the poor, as an explanation of their poverty, finds scientific justification in the writings of those sociologists who have created the 'culture of poverty' theory, citing lack of achievement motivation [McClelland, 1961], failure to conceptualise progress [Foster, 1967], unwillingness to take risks [Cancian, 1972], etc., as explanations for underdevelopment and poverty.

While this view has been seriously challenged in other fields, it seems to take a long time to be discredited and to die out in adult education. Charles Valentine has provided the most detailed critique of the 'culture of poverty' theory, and he has shown that the much publicised characteristics of the poor are better explained as the poor's response to their conditions than as causes of their poverty:

Lack of work, lack of income, and the rest pose conditions to which the poor must adapt through whatever socio-cultural resources they control. These conditions are phenomena of the environment in which the poor live, determined not by behaviours and values of the poor but by the structure of the total system... this larger structure is perpetrated primarily by the economic and political actions of the non-poor.

(Valentine, 1968; p 116)

One means of treating Freire's concept of 'culture of silence' as 'culture of poverty' is by misinterpreting Freire's use of terms like 'naive consciousness', 'fatalism', 'superstition', 'naivety', etc. By using these terms in an everyday sense, and without establishing a relationship between these terms and oppression, pseudo-Freireans are able to justify their own view of poverty as a self-inflicted phenomenon. Such a view distracts attention away from what the dominant classes are doing to the poor, focusing instead on what the poor are doing to themselves. Indeed, Freire describes the oppressed as 'naive', 'superstitious', 'fatalistic', etc., but he never suggests that these are self-inflicted characteristics or that the culture of silence is a self-generated phenomenon. What he means is that the oppressed are unable to objectify themselves in relation to the dominant classes, and they accept the

oppressors view of themselves. "The only way to understand the culture of silence", Freire says, "is to see it as a totality that is itself part of a larger complex... it is not something born by spontaneous generation on the spot. Rather, it arises from the inter-relations of the Third World and the metropolis" [Freire, 1975]. Thus, the 'culture of silence' is inextricably linked to and denned by the dominant word of the oppressor. The 'naivety' of the oppressed is linked to their being an object of oppression. The 'culture of silence' is not an isolated, independent culture with its own internal dynamics. It exists in relation to the dominant culture by which it is defined.

FROM 'LIBERATION' TO 'DOMESTICATION'

The pseudo-Freirean view of poverty helps us comprehend how another popular Freirean term, 'critical consciousness', is used in pseudo-Freirean literature. If the operative source of poverty is to be found among the poor themselves, then the remedy must come from the same source. Thus, the pseudo-Freirean perspective suggests that poverty can be overcome by changing the poor, by helping them develop better habits and skills, rather than by a change in the social structure.

Lacking structural perception, men attribute the sources of their situation to something within themselves rather than to something in objective reality ... If the explanation for those situations lies... in men's own 'natural' incapacity it is obvious that their action will not be orientated towards transforming reality but towards that resumed incapacity.

(Freire, 1970b, p 36)

When pseudo-Freireans talk about 'critical consciousness', they mean an awareness in the poor of their needs and the information that is available for fulfilling these needs. The social problems that cause oppression, such as low wages, unequal access to land, water, and education, are ignored. The strategy is to manipulate the consciousness of the oppressed, thereby perpetuating and reinforcing the dependence of the oppressed on external definers of their consciousness. This is precisely what domestication is.

La Belle [1976] makes a useful distinction between this 'deprivation-development' strategy for social change and Freire's 'dependency-liberation' strategy. The former is based on a psychological view of disadvantage (deprivation) and pre-

scribes behaviour modification (development) as the solution. The latter explains disadvantage as the result of structural inequalities that create dependency and proposes to increase the power of the oppressed (liberation) as a solution.

The 'deprivation-development' strategy is the crux of the pseudo-Freirean argument. It provides a route out of the liberal dilemma on how to handle Freire's politics :

Freire's techniques have been adapted for establishing a dialogue and engaging the learner in reflection rather than more political connotations of his approach.

(Srinivasan, 1977; p 7)

By suggesting that poverty is self-inflicted, and not a product of oppression, that the major problem is lack of skills, rather than structural constraints, the pseudo-Freireans succeed in bypassing the political aspect of Freire. They are able to accommodate him within the liberal-humanist model of adult education. They create the impression that Freire is simply another in the tradition of technique-innovators. They recognise the authoritarian nature of traditional teaching, and consider Freire as yet another classroom-methodologist who can help the adult educator in shedding some of the authoritarianism of his traditional role. According to Griffith [1972], "Freire's notions about the necessity for making the student an active, questioning, thinking participant in the formal education process are neither new nor revolutionary". In urging that the adult learner should be involved in his own learning, Griffith says, Freire belongs to a long line of humanist educationists.

The pseudo-Freireans accept Freire's criticism of 'banking' education, and appear to use his concept of 'dialogue', but they apply this term interchangeably with 'discussion'. They claim to have 'adapted and adopted' such conscientisation techniques as the use of pictures to represent life situations and the use of generative themes [Srinivasan, 1977]. It is precisely through such 'adaption and adoption' that in the UNKSCO work-oriented literacy method, which we have discussed earlier, Freire's codes of unemployment, hunger, oppression, and liberation could be translated into developmental modules of family planning, nutrition, sanitation and modem agriculture. Evidently, Freire provided a revolutionary gloss to such projects, and his revolutionary associations supplied a

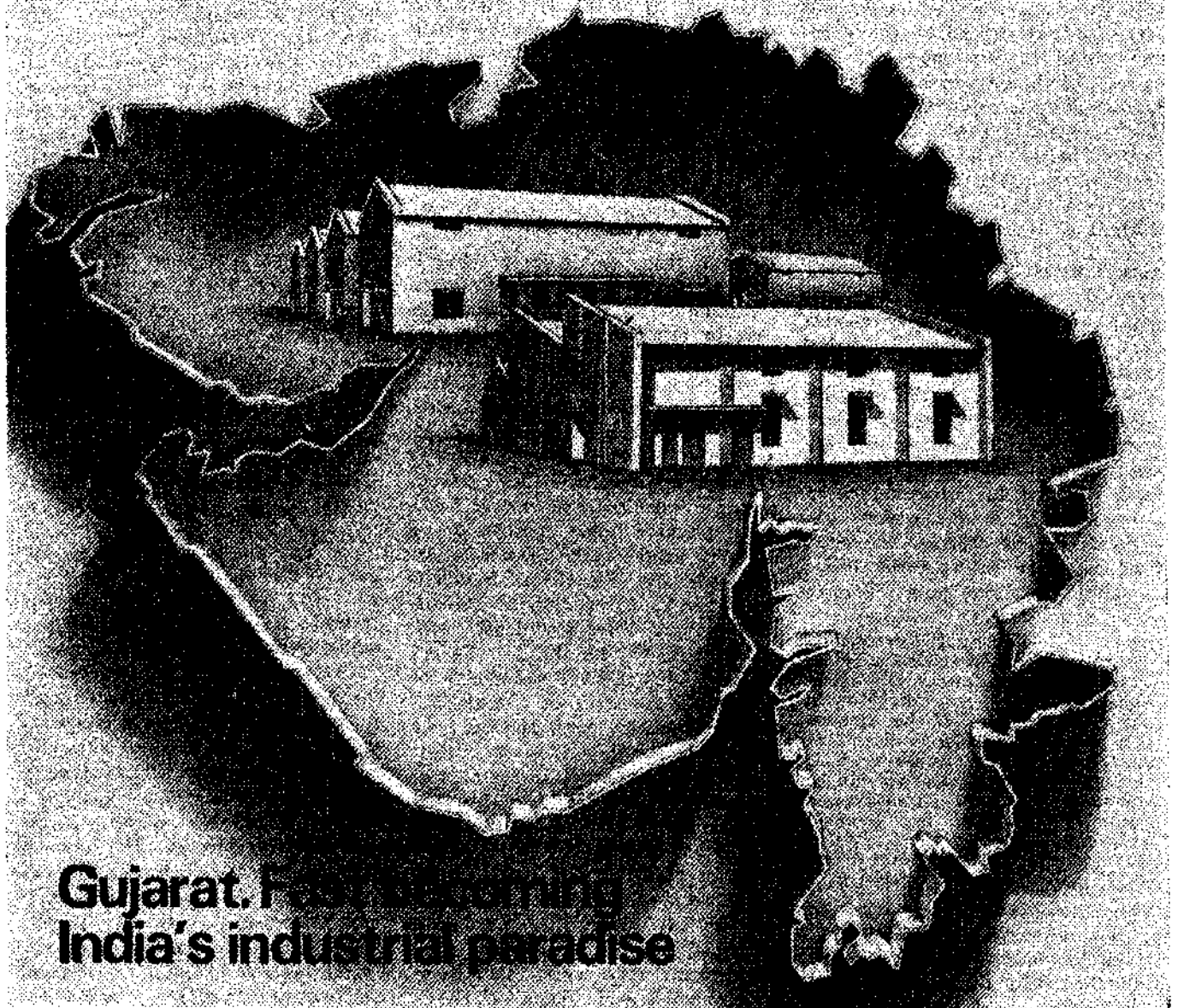
smoke-screen for the real intent of non-formal education which was to legitimise existing social relations in the Third World and between the Third and the industrialised world.

Pseudo-Freirean pedagogy converts dialogue into a form of 'discovery learning' making a mockery of Freire's philosophy. In this conversion, dialogue becomes a search for the 'right' answers, predetermined by the programme planner and provided to the teacher, normally through a teacher's guide. In effect, dialogue thus becomes a subtle form of 'banking', a means of propagating the new myths of development. In his "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" Freire had anticipated this dilution of 'dialogue' into an instrument for domestication: "Without this faith in man dialogue is a farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation" [Freire, 1970a]. Authentic dialogue is possible only when people are trusted and given the chance to ask their own questions and make their own decisions. Indeed, pseudo-Freireans appear to be doing something similar, but the methods they apply show that what happens in their projects is quite different.

A good illustration can be drawn from the methodology of 'problem solving'. It is usually presented as a multi-step process involving an examination of the facts of a problem-situation, identification of the likely consequences of alternative actions, and selection and implementation of the final alternative [Mezirow, 1972]. The rhetoric suggests a two-way communication and active engagement of the learner in the problem-solving process. However, the reality, as our case study will presently show, is that of a predetermined, technical, and narrowly defined process. 'Problem-solving' is, in fact, a pseudo-Freirean version of Freire's concept of problematisation. The inclusion of 'problem-solving' as one of the skills to be taught through a literacy programme implies that adult illiterates are poor problem-solvers. Such a view of the people obviously does not regard the survival techniques used by them to cope with a hostile economic structure and difficult physical circumstances as problem-solving skills. Pseudo-Freirean Pedagogy starts by denying that people have problem-solving skills, and goes on to supply pre-packaged information on problem-solving methods and behaviour. For pseudo-Freireans, each problem comprises segregated bit of life that poses an immediate difficulty

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The wheels that gear industrial growth in Gujarat

and must be offered an immediate solution. Thus, they offer a disintegrated view of life in the name of an 'integrated' method. Their dilemma is

... like that of many educators who really want to do good and therefore bring change, but who insist that it is always others who must learn, who must change. They therefore seek new techniques and "innovation", rejecting the basic Issue as unrealistic, that it is not compatible with the reality defined by the *status quo*. They are in favour of the revolution, as long as it doesn't change anything. (Williams, 1971; p 83)

For Freire, authentic dialogue must lead to action which is then analysed and evaluated before further action. This process of action and reflection is what Freire calls 'praxis'. Action is not just any action; it involves *collective struggle* to challenge the existing social relations which determine some of the basic components of social life, such as, access to land, water, housing, and income. In several pseudo-Freirean programmes where the idea of collective action is cultivated, collective potential is channelled towards pre-planned economic projects like chicken or vegetable farming, and no attempt is made to challenge the inequities in the economic and power structure. The assumption behind such programmes is obviously the view that low production rather than unjust social structure is the problem, i.e., only if the poor would produce more they would be better off.

II

Pseudo-Freirean Method: A Case Study

With the help of our theoretical framework of pseudo-Freirean pedagogy, we made a case study of a major non-formal adult education agency operating in the Third World, namely World Education, Inc. Our main reason for selecting this agency as a case was the scale of its coverage. It supports projects in 50 countries, and its publications circulate in 138 countries. A second reason of our choice was that the period of most rapid growth in World Education's life of twenty eight years synchronises with the period in which pseudo-Freirean pedagogy developed, namely the seventies. A third reason comes from the fact that the funding sources of World Education include both developmental agencies such as the World Bank and USAID as well as privately owned multinational corporations like General Foods, IBM, Exxon, Carnegie, and foundations such as Ford, Battenheim, and Tinker [WE

Annual Report, 1976-77 and 1977-78].

What is known today as World Education was established in 1951 under the name of World Literacy, Inc, mainly to assist Literacy House (then Literacy Village) in the north Indian province of Uttar Pradesh [WE Annual Report, 1977-78]. Literacy House was started in the early 1952 by Welthy 11 Fisher, an American Presbyterian missionary.⁵ World Education's initial area of operation was confined to India, and Literacy House remained its field laboratory for a long time. World Education's first major project outside India was in Thailand where it developed the prototype for the National Adult Literacy Programme. The methodology developed in this project was later transported to Turkey, Ethiopia, Kenya and Bangladesh, as well as to World Education's home country, the United States, under the project called 'AIM: An Exemplary Program for International Experience'. (AIM stands for Apperception-Interaction Method). World Education's area of operation corresponds to the American sphere of influence. The major countries it has served during the period of our study are Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, India, and Turkey in Asia; Columbia, Honduras, and Guatemala in Latin America; Ghana, Kenya and Ethiopia in Africa.

The time for rapid and expansive growth in World Education's activities came in 1968, after it submitted proposals; to the USAID for funds for "linking literacy programmes and family planning education". (It is worth noting that in the 1968-72 period, USAID funding for population control programmes escalated fourfold, from \$34 million to \$123 million, while USAID's health care funding dropped from \$164 million to 160 million). According to World Education's President, Thomas B. Keefm, "the aims of this programme were twofold: (1) to attack the problems of resistance to family planning arising from tradition, religion, superstition, fear, ignorance, and economic concern, and (2) to develop non-formal functional education programme directed toward out-of-school young adults with the lowest literacy levels, where the needs are greatest" [Keehn, 1972]. The proposals were accepted, and in the next five years — i.e., from 1969 to 1974 — World Education revenue increased five-fold, from \$200,000 to over \$1,000,000 [WE Annual Report, 1973-74]. The project which enabled World Education to increase its revenue,

staff, and area of operations so remarkably was called "functional education for family life planning", and this programme provided the organisation with its new and overall identity in the Third World.

Like many other non-formal adult education agencies, World Education has carried in its work over the decade of the seventies a distinct stamp of the ideas and terminology associated with Paulo Freire. The organisation's annual report for 1976-77 proudly declared this lineage:

Provocative challenges to traditional assumptions about adult learning have been born and nurtured in Latin America. Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, and others have produced a new generation of educators who know from their own experience that peasants and the urban poor are both learners and teachers... We find enthusiastic response among these young educators to our understanding of the partnership between learners and teachers in a dynamic educational process.

In a monograph which outlines the programme design for the Functional Education for Family Life Planning, David Harman points at Freire's distinction between 'banking' education and the new, dialogue-based pedagogy professed in the monograph [Harman, 1973]. We have already given an example of the importance attached to Freire by another World Education theorist [Srinivasan, 1977]. Allusions to Freirean ideas are to be found all over the literacy materials and reports produced by or associated with World Education as our discussion of some of these materials will presently show.

CURRICULUM FOR DOMESTICATION

The functional literacy programme in Thailand, which started in 1970, offers us a key example of World Education's curriculum planning. As an active collaborator with the Thai Ministry of Education, World Education's personnel made a major attempt in Thailand to modernise a conservative adult education programme by offering their technical expertise and progressive-looking terminology. The curriculum was developed on the basis of a survey of people's beliefs, habits, living conditions, needs, and language patterns. People's problems were spotted during the survey, and the final curriculum was supposed to reflect these problems [Ministry of Education, Thailand, 1972]. Such a survey smacks of Freire's strategy to send project members to the villages in order to obtain a participant's view of oppressive conditions in which villagers

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live. The Thai surveys were similar to Freire's strategy only in a superficial way as we can easily see if we notice the stated purpose of these surveys in the ministry documents:

The ultimate goal of the Thai concept-oriented program of functional literacy and family life education is to improve the living conditions of the people in the rural areas by attempting to correct misconceptions and to change the outmoded behaviours.

(Ministry of Education, Thailand, 1972)

The assumption in this statement is dearly what we have earlier shown as the pseudo-Freirean theory of the culture of poverty. Placed in the light of this assumptions, the baseline survey of people's needs and problems becomes a sham. It is only logical that people are described as the 'target populations' in such surveys: indeed, people are targets of manipulation in the Thai curriculum. According to Bernard and Armstrong [1979], in the Thai surveys 'The role of the villagers is limited to providing the baseline information'. Data analysis and interpretation, and the determination of "what ought to be", is done by an inter-agency committee of local experts".

The Thai curriculum illustrates the range and the nature of people's 'problematic' behaviour which is the target of change under literacy teaching. Four main areas comprise the first level curriculum: agriculture, health and family life, economics, and civics. The topics listed under these are characterised by a blatant didacticism.⁶ Economic and political aspects of the material conditions of Thai people are totally ignored,⁷ whereas the need for cleanliness, budgeting, and obedience to official advice are emphasised. Clearly, the curriculum is not meant to deal with structural problems. Its purpose is to develop acceptance of the *status quo*. It is significant that the central symbol of the Thai programme was a Buddhist figure of achievement, the Khit Mien man who behaves rationally and with contentment under all circumstances and accepts suffering in the name of avoiding useless striving;

Suppose one is imprisoned for a certain period of time, after having explored and tried all the possible ways of getting out and failed, a 'Khit Phen' man will try to live as happily as he possibly can in that situation until an opportunity to get out arises again. (Bennett and Vorapiarana, 1975; p 7).

The Thai curriculum had several of the fundamental features of the pseudo-

Freirean mode of operation. In its technicist concern, it was perhaps more sophisticated than any other similar programme in the world. The use of looseleaf covers and cards in place of the traditional primer merely disguised the real orthodox nature of the programme.

In our examination of literacy materials developed with the help of World Education experts in Thailand and Turkey, and the primers produced by the Literacy House, Lucknow, we found that the reality symbolised in them is highly artificial and totally removed from the material conditions of people's life in these countries. The crucial problems and challenges facing the people seem to undergo a process of deft concealment and disjunction through their presentation in the materials. The structural relationships of economic classes are never depicted. Instead, one finds a collection of selective images of life, in an unspecified economic setting along with a didactic text. Objects that can provoke any dialectical understanding, such as the contrast between the rich and the poor, are simply removed from pictures and the text; and the symptoms, rather than the causes, of problems are attacked. The overall image of society that is projected in the primers is that of harmony and co-operation, rather than of the actual conflicts and divisions.

Pseudo-Freireans follow Freire in calling the key problems they attack in the materials as 'generative themes' or 'codes', terms that World Education theorist David Harman acknowledges to have come in their current usage from Freire's work [Harman, 1973b]. The themes that Freire calls generative should "contain the possibility of unfolding into again as many themes, which in their turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled" [Freire, 1970a, p 93]. The themes we see in the literacy primers, on the contrary, are one-dimensional and flat, incapable of leading the learner to a better understanding of the structural context of his oppression through associative thinking. In fact, they come across as a set of slogans which victimise the learners by making them feel inadequate, and thereby reinforcing their dependence. "Aao Charcha Karen", a Hindi primer published by the Literacy House in India [Tripathi and Prakash, 1978], offers some good examples of the treatment given in several other primers to common Third World situations. The key to happiness, according to this book, lies in family planning through

birth control;

How lucky are the people who are born in small families. They have no dearth of anything. They face no problems. All the means of pleasure and comfort are within their reach. Life is heaven for them.

(Our translation of Lesson 18)

The philosophy that it is lucky to be born in a small family is parallel to the messages given in this book on other common problems;

Eating just rice has a bad effect on health.

Eat eggs to make up for protein deficiency.

Crowds are increasing because of increasing in population.

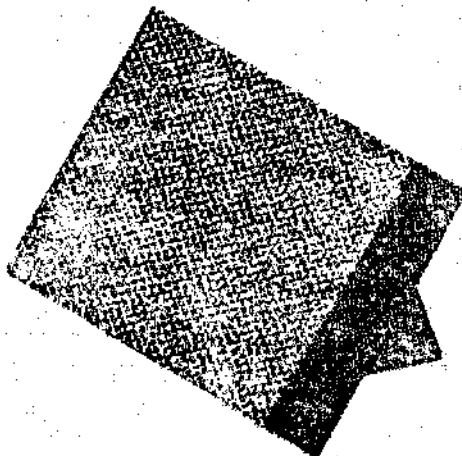
Everywhere, the so-called 'problem-centred' lessons of the primer subtly try to divert the learner's attention away from the economic and political causes of social and personal problems. The sentence about rice-eating does not show why so many people in India are forced to eat only rice. It presents them as people who have a bad habit grown out of ignorance. The sentence about protein deficiency does not allow people to question why an age-old source of protein in Indian diet, lentils, has become scarce and expensive, and its per capita availability has declined in the post-Green Revolution period. The Indian literacy learner is simply being asked to switch from lentils to eggs.

The pseudo-Freirean view of knowledge consists of right and wrong answers. The 'correct' answer is predetermined by the planner, and 'packaged' in the primer and other materials. The teacher's job is simply to dispense the pre-packaged knowledge. While he must be prepared with the 'correct' answers to anticipated questions, he must also maintain an air of exploratory participation in the group discussion. Pseudo-Freirean programme planners insist on calling their strategy as 'dialogue', but the practices they recommend in the teacher-guides is indistinguishable from 'banking'. Freire has warned against using the codes as bureaucratic formulas. The pseudo-Freirean practice is not only in glaring contrast to Freire, but also to their own theorists:

... the essence of education is that it does not drive people to accept predetermined ends but, instead, fosters the initiative for them to participate intelligently in the choice of ends. Educators do not set out to convince, persuade, or engineer consent. This is the realm of propagandists. Rather, educators help people to become more aware, to understand more clearly, to decide more rationally whether or not to adopt birth control practice.

(Mezirow, 1972; p 2)

*"I'm a bank officer...
I think my clothes should give me good value."*



*Your kind of fabrics
for your kind of clothes*



Suitings, Shirtings, Sarees, Dress Materials and Denims.

MAFATLAL INDUSTRIES KEV SHOROCK MILLS MAFATLAL FINE

This statement looks like mere rhetoric if we examine the Thai programme in which Mezirow played an important role. The correct answer in most of the basic lessons of this programme could only be one word that was to be filled in by the learner.

The irony of the teacher's behaviour in a pseudo-Freirean programme comes out most visibly in the Turkish programme [Republic of Turkey/World Education, 1973] where a dramatic representation is implanted in narratives to be read aloud. The purpose of this representation is to make class-discussion truly 'live'. The narratives start with a conversation about a problem; enlightening information is offered in the middle part, and the end presents a resolution. The dogmatic nature of the dialogue cannot be mistaken:

Doctor Ayhan Tezel (to Ali Dede): I like your village very much. May be the reason for this is that I am a villager myself. Your village is very poor. But it is sweet and charming. Poverty may also be overcome.

Ali Dede: Poverty and prosperity depend on the person's own ability.

Ali Dede confirms the self-infliction theory of poverty which is the backbone of World Education's educational thinking. It is inevitable that the questions and answers that follow the problem-dramas of the Turkish teacher-manuals should put blatantly what the dramas convey somewhat deftly. A problem-drama titled "How to Live as a Human" is followed by this set of recommended question and answer between the learner and the teacher:

Learner: Why do we get unbalanced, one-sided nutrition?

Teacher: Because we don't know how to get balanced nutrition.

The learner's image as reflected in the Turkish and several other materials is that of a foolish, ignorant person. In lesson after lesson of the Turkish programme we hear about worried people suddenly becoming jubilant by coming to know how a new habit or thing can change their world.

III

Conclusion

Our case study provides one instance of the process by which pseudo-Freirean pedagogy domesticates the literacy learners of some Third World countries. The co-optation of Paulo Freire is an important aspect in the political economy of education in the Third World today. Our study shows how a philosophy of liberation, which originated in a Third World country,

can be used for developing a strategy for perpetuating dependence. Evidently, the process cannot be seen in isolation from the socio-economic factors that characterise the relations between the countries that have economic power and the countries that lack such power.

Notes

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earlier drafts of this paper, and to Frances Little for her editorial help.]

1 Under different labels, such as adult education, adult literacy, agricultural extension, community development, etc.

2 The Green Revolution was based on the new, high-yielding seeds developed by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. It was expected that these seeds would provide the answer to the growing food shortages in the Third World, increased food production was seen as a weapon against the growing social unrest in the Third World, and as an alternative to land reforms and more equitable economic structures. One of its aims was to deepen the control of Third World agriculture by multinational agri-business corporations. While the Green Revolution did help the larger, wealthier farmers to double and triple their production, and the agri-business to expand its operations in the Third World, it also increased landlessness, unemployment, and caused massive dispossession of small-holders. (For details on the Green Revolution, see Cleaver, 1973 Feder, 1976; George, 1976).

3 In fact, as the earlier note indicates, many of these programmes (e.g. Green Revolution) had exacerbated his situation, pushing him into debt and forcing him off the land and into the rural proletariat.

4 Viewing the accumulation of considerable wealth as "at someone's expense" seems totally rational, and to be distrustful, for example of one's employer, larger landowner, or the moneylender, seems more like a positive than a negative characteristic. "Impulse deferral and gratification amore" the poor, much as among other people, probably vary situationally and may be maximised when a future reward can be confidently predicted, which of course is not often among those who live in poverty" [Valentine, 1971; p 210].

5 The story of the co-genesis of these two institutions is not totally clear since the facts written in different places, i.e. World Education's reports, Welthy Fisher's autobiography, and an article by Tripathi (1979) do not match. We would like to mention a few anecdotal details we have gleaned from Ms Fisher's autobiography, "to Light a recalls how (after leaving China in

the midst of revolution in 1947) in the first week of her stay in a Delhi hotel she received a telegram from one Or Mosher, "an old friend working on a research programme for the agricultural institute in Allahabad". (Dr Mosher later became the president of Agricultural Development Council, an American organ of the Green Revolution. According to Cleaver [1973], in a handbook of the Council, Mosher emphasised "the theme of teaching peasants to want more for themselves, to abandon collective habits, and to go on with the 'business' of farming".) This was an invitation to come and contribute to the programme:

The experiment was, I believe, underwritten by the Ford Foundation. I never did find out just who paid for what but, of course, there was never enough money. . . . The Institute's practical work, they told me, was hampered because the Indians could not read. Indians are seldom stupid and embrace change. They wanted to learn and that was why I was there (p 239).

Two years later, Ms Fisher visited the United States in search of funds for the Literacy Village she had established in Lucknow on advice from the state's Chief Minister:

Early in 1955 I left for America to find some money. All my life since the fire at Rao Lin T had been a beggar. It was not hard for me any more to raid neckties in a good cause. It took some doing this time but the able trustees of an organisation called World Literacy, Inc. accepted any proposals and underwrote the budget of forty-five thousand dollars (p 252).

This history is far from clear, but it suggests that, *nee*, World Literacy Inc, of New York predated Literacy House in India; and, two, that Welthy Fisher created an operational base for American funded educational work in India. Our second conclusion is based on a lack of consistency between Welthy Fisher's statement in her autobiography that she had no plans before going to India, and World Education's statement that it has existed since 1951 to assist Literacy House — an institution that did not exist then.

The purpose of recalling this anecdotal information is to provide a historical basis for our understanding of World Education's work and policies. In 1951, India was a nascent republic, open and willing to undertake with full enthusiasm the programme of Community Development which had come from the dominant American sociological thinking of the day. After the collapse of all hopes for business and missionary interest in China, India offered a fresh and vast ground for experiments involving

corporate charity and welfare democracy. Two potential obstacles for such experiments went spotted early by American developers: India's population, and the traditional character of Indian society. These were then and have since consistently been cited as the two crucial causes of India's problems, as against economic structure of her society and her colonial links. Both of These 'causes' figure in Welthy Fisher's reflections on India in 1954:

You cannot help these warm, helpful people unless you love them enough, Welthy I said to myself. Do you love them enough? You can scarcely make the slightest dent in the poverty and ignorance of a land so overpopulated and undereducated (P 254)

- 6 Some examples of the 'concepts' listed in the Thai curriculum are as follows:

To get more rice, the farmer should follow official advice on farming methods.

Labour-saving tools as tractors and threshing machines are more efficient in their work, thus saving time, energy and producing more rice.

Eating meat and eggs makes man healthy and strong. Daily food should consist of rice, meat, eggs, vegetables and fruit.

Producers should take into account the cost of investment and its return. Profit should be enough for spending and for further investment.

Cost of investment comprises the following items: land, material and equipment, labour, construction, etc.

A family with physically or mentally handicapped members, for example, blindness, deafness, disabled limbs, parasthenia, feeble mindedness should pay proper attention to such persons...

(excerpted from Ministry of Education, Thailand. 1972; p 1-14).

- 7 Thailand's primarily agricultural economy developed serious contradictions during the Green Revolution. A whole class of the small capitalist farmer came up, and the condition of peasants became worse. The Peasants Federation of Thailand was established in 1974 to resist the exploitation of the Thai peasant through tenancy laws, low wages, high interest loans, and corrupt practices of government officials. All through the seventies, the Thai state machinery, with help from the United States army and officials, tried to suppress massive struggle by peasants, workers and students. From the American point of view, Thailand became a key test case for stopping socialism by direct intervention and ideological war (Turton, 1978; Hell, 1978). The

latter strategy operated mainly through educational programmes.

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